

Senators occasionally, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support what Senator Wesely is trying to accomplish. Being an employer and being active in health care fields throughout the years, I am a firm believer that one of the ways we can help contain health care costs is to make more people aware of what insurance and health care costs actually are. I think this is a step towards the right direction. The American Hospital Association, the Health Insurance Association of America, NECI, OCCC, all these groups endorse what we are trying to do here today. I think this is a first step towards trying to contain health care costs and make the public aware and the people aware more of what it is actually costing them. So in essence I am trying to support what Senator Wesely is trying to do.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Warner, did you wish to close on the committee amendments, please?

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would hope you would adopt the committee amendments which at least then provides the continuation of the existing plan for one year, provides the opportunity to look at alternates next year. If you reject the committee amendment then you are looking, as the bill is written, to go to a new plan plus the dental and that, in fact, is a 17 percent increase or a 19 percent increase according to the figures that was passed out this morning. We were told 17 percent earlier. But you are looking at that compared to an 8.4 percent. Now the argument is apparently that if you have less coverage, you will make less use. I find that a little hard to believe generally. The argument is made that if you go to the new plan, forget the dental, that you are helping the employees and I would agree with that as long as you don't get sick. But if you get sick, then the new plan does not help you. In fact, it puts you in a much worse position and those medical costs are high. Part of the argument is that state employees stay in the hospital longer than the average. Well I rather doubt that they make that decision. At least my experience with any family in the hospital, we didn't make the decision when we were to be released. So that argument doesn't really hold any water with me. Now it may be true that the medical profession as a whole needs to